

A MAN AND A MAN'S JOB



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“COME and see”—“Where” not “Whom” was their inquiry. “Master where dwellest thou?” Yet John’s statement was—“Behold the Lamb of God.” “Why?” “Who taketh away the sin of the world!” “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister.” “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” “Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.”

These texts outline both The Man and His Job. A peculiar people. Then all the work of the Son of Man was to produce a peculiar people. The world is full of peculiar people, but there are many varieties of peculiarities. Every Christian is a peculiar person but every peculiar person is not a Christian. Every leader of a peculiar people is not a minister of the Gospel, but every minister of the Gospel is the leader of a peculiar people and the peculiarities are marked, they cannot be missed. Nevertheless, it takes a Christian to understand the peculiarities that are the characteristics of a Christian. Our Lord was never, and has never been understood by the world nor can his consistant followers expect to be understood.

What things constitute a Christian’s peculiarity?

1. He is a creature of dual birth. He has been born once of the flesh and then of the spirit. Except a man be born anew—from above—he cannot be a Christian, no matter how bright he is, brave he is, good he is, cultured he is, capable he is, conscientious he is. Unless he has been twice born he is outside the family of God. We may look on him and love him and recognize he is not far from being at home in God, but at the best he is still outside the door, nor can he enter here until he is born again. Our Lord made this very clear to Nicodemus yet there are many who continue to stumble just like the ruler of old. To the Greeks foolishness and to the Jews a stumbling block.

A Christian is a child of God not by creation but by regeneration. Spiritually he is born into this relationship and legally he is adopted so that he has a right to all the privileges of a son of God. "As many as received Him to them gave he the authority to become the Children of God." Hence they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to the incorruptible inheritance.

2. The Christian lives in a very real and very trying sense a double life. Yet he is not a hypocrite. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "That which I would not, that I do and that which I would, I do not." The double life grows out of his dual birth. The spirit striveth against the flesh and the flesh lusteth against the spirit. It is a terrible combat. The Christian is seeking to put off the old man with his lusts and to put on the new man which

is after Christ in righteousness and holiness. This is all a great mystery to the man of the world who imagines that a Christian professes to be so good that he never does anything wrong. Yet the Christian constantly confesses his wrong-doing and affirms his inability to do right apart from God. The transformation into the likeness of the image of the perfect man is slow and laborious.

3. The Christian is peculiar because he is not his own master. He knows this to be a fact, constantly acknowledges the same and rejoices in consequence. He was bought with a price. He was redeemed with precious blood from all iniquity and purified from the effects of his former servitude, now to serve another. The old service was debasing, galling, sad; this new service—uplifting, free, (willing), glad. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." The Christian doesn't even live his own life. He is possessed by another and the other lives in him. "I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me." When a knock comes to the door and he is asked, "Who lives here?" he can reply like Martin Luther, "I used to live here but now Jesus Christ lives here. Consequently Stephen Girard's clerk could work for him any time, day or night, except on Sunday for his master had commanded. "In it thou shalt not do any work."

4. The Christian is peculiar because of his business. All Christians have the same business. By trade or profession the Christian may be the same as the man of the world and he will always do the work or fill the

position better than the average. He is diligent and faithful and fervent. He is all this and more as a Christian for his is the business of the King. Like William Cary he may earn his living by cobbling shoes but he lives to bring in the Kingdom of God. Soon after the outbreak of the present European war Premier Asquith entertained Lord Kitchener at dinner. At the close of the meal Kitcheuer abruptly inquired of his host, "Who is that woman that sat by me?" He replied, "She is my wife's companion and closest friend." "What do you know of her?" "A good deal but I will send for Lady Asquith and she can tell you everything you want to know." After some perfunctory inquiries of Lady Asquith, Kitchener said, "You must search this woman's room." "Oh, that is impossible," was the reply, "I cannot search her rooms, she is my dearest friend and trusted companion." "Then I will search them myself" responded Kitchener. To prevent this the rooms were searched by the family and it was discovered that "the dearest friend" was a valued agent of the German Government. She was earning a handsome salary as a "companion" but she was serving the Kaiser. Every Christian is earning a living in the world but he is serving the King of Kings.

They serve in many ways. It was only a little later that another exposure occurred in London. One of the closest friends, not only of the aristocracy but of royalty who had lived in England for twenty-five years and had attended, faithfully during that time, all great

social and civic functions was found, also, to be an employee of the Kaiser. Diligently he had kept himself in touch with all the affairs of state that he might thereby inform his master and serve his interests. So the Lord Jesus Christ calls upon his servants in this world to be as loyal to his interest as the men of the world are to Kings and Kaisers. The Kings of this world expect the best from their servants. Our Lord can ask for nothing less.

A number of years ago, as some of you will remember, an English Admiral was shot for not doing his utmost. He was a man of ability, he was not a traitor but no matter what his other qualifications, he was considered not only unfit to longer command, but unfit to live because in a trying hour he had not done his utmost. So the Christian, to enjoy his privileges, needs to always be and do his best.

5. The Christian is peculiar because of his interests. They begin in himself and they reach to God and embrace all the world. Everything that touches and blesses or curses humanity is of intesest to the Christian. He is alive on the subject of Prohibition, child labor, shorter working hours, sufficient wage, proper homes, hospitals, hotels, prisons, penitentaries, schools, colleges, Home and Foreign Missions, Immigrants, Indians, Negros, Hottentots, Turks, Germans, French, English, Asiatics, Mexicans and Americans, as well as an his own home and family, his own Church and brethren in the Lord. The man of the world may have many excuses for not supporting the church, for

not being interested in Social Service, for not giving to Foreign Missions but the Christian must include one and all of these things. His interests are universal.

6. The Christian is peculiar because of his other worldliness. He lives in this world but does not belong here. He is criticised for living with "his head in the clouds" although his feet are on the earth. It is fortunate that his feet remain on the earth for thereby he brings blessings to all. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace." The Christian could not render the earthly ministries did he fail to keep his head in the clouds. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "Set your affections upon the things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." These are the Christian's definite instructions. He cannot settle down here, therefore, he looks for a better country even a heavenly. He goes about doing good.

7. The Christian is peculiar because he lives by faith, not by sight. The promise of God is more valuable to him than a bank account. He asks but only that he may be able to give. He labors not to get but because he already has. He is the strongest yet the weakest of men. "When I am weak, then am I strong." "He endures as seeing Him who is invisible." He is the happiest man on earth yet is blessed because he mourns daily. He is full of joy not because things go his way but because he is going God's

way. He is the most contented of all men yet never satisfied. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am herewith to be content." "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" "Not that I have already attainedForgetting the things which are behind I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The Christian never can be satisfied —for he seeks the perfection of God—till he awakes in God's likeness. "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." The Christian is the most agreeable of all men and yet to many, the most disagreeable. "As far as in him lieth he lives peaceably with all men." Yet he is always stirring men up to flee from the wrath to come. His very presence is a constant reproach to non-christians. He is sure there is but one way and as he walks in it himself, he continually is urging others. "This is the way, walk ye in it."

The Christian waits and works but he does not worry. He waits not that all things may come to him but because all things are already his. For Christ is his and God is Christ's, therefore, all are his. He waits on God for heart cleansing, for renewed strength, for confirmed courage, for sufficient grace to spend, to use, to give all that he has and grow thereby. In my first pastorate I had a very peculiar elder who had, by his generosity to all good things and all kinds of men, gone through two fortunes and was then busy spending the third. It seemed a great mystery to us that he should always be provided just as the former

had been spent. He was a wastrel for God, therefore God saw to it that he should never want.

The Christian loves because he is already loved. "We love him because he first loved us." The Christian seeks to love even as Christ loved. "By this shall all men know," said our Lord, "that ye are my disciples when ye have love one for the other." The Christian scatters love like autumn leaves for God lives in him and it becomes second nature to love, for "God is love." Yes, the Christian is a vessel sanctified and meet to contain God, to be used by God, to reveal God and even to lift up God in Christ Jesus that all men may be drawn unto him.

No wonder the Christian is a mystery and an unsolved problem to the man of the world. His peculiarities oft times make the Christian appear to be a fool and so peculiar is he that he glories in being counted a fool for Christ's sake. Let the man of the world shake his head and exclaim "It's to much for me. I don't understand him. I cannot fathom him." The Christian at least is in the public eye. He cannot be hid. He is watched and, although not understood, he is a living Epistle known and read of all men.

Do these peculiarities appeal to you? Would you like to manifest these characteristics and activities? What manner of men ought ye to be who profess to be Christians? These peculiarities are not natural to the human family. Very few yet exhibit them in any marked degree. But we have seen enough of

them in the few to assure us that to all there is a possibility. "All things are possible with God." "All things are possible to him that believeth."

In the Spanish-American war, it was claimed that "the man behind the gun" explained the easy victory. But is not the man behind the man the real explanation? Heredity, inheritance, truth and training made the difference in the gunners. So it is the man behind the Christian that makes the difference. "Behold the man!" The Lord Jesus Christ is able to make all grace abound toward us, that we having all sufficiency in all things may abound unto every good work. If each of us is to do a man's job we must get back to Christ. He finished the work given him by the Father. Now he continues to wait on us and work in us till we finish our task. Christ is the secret of the Christian's peculiarities. What a man he is redeemed, and purified and zealous of good works! What a job is his—a co-worker with Christ! Lord make us workmen that need not be ashamed. AMEN.

